

heartbeats louder than sirens by topangamatthews

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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Summary:

And they would all ask eventually, “So how did you two meet?” and El would always smirk before answering, “My dad arrested him. He told me he was cute.”

heartbeats louder than sirens

His parents were going to kill him. Literally.

He closed his eyes and pressed his face to the cool window of the police truck and tried not to imagine what his parents were going to say when they went down to the station to pick him up. Or was he going to go to jail? *Shit.*

Mike had a good reason for punching that other guy in the face. He really did. But he couldn't tell anyone what it was because Mike Wheeler did not break promises. Or secrets. So when the police chief showed up and pulled him off the other guy, Troy, and asked Mike what had happened, he stayed quiet.

The chief had read him his rights, handcuffed him, and now he was in the back of his truck, wishing Troy had finished him off and killed him before his parents had the chance to. He swore he almost had. He felt where the blood running from his nose had reached his upper lip, felt the swelling of his cheek where Troy had punched him. His head was pounding from being pressed against the concrete.

He already knew that the news of the fight was going to be all around school on Monday, if it wasn't already. Troy had run off when the cops showed up, no doubt finding people to gloat about it to after cleaning himself off from where Mike punched him in the mouth. He was lost in his thoughts, thinking about Troy going to his buddies and saying how he finally beat the shit out of "nerd-ass Wheeler," when the police chief came inside the truck and interrupted him.

"You know, kid," the chief said, taking off his hat and putting it on the dashboard of his truck. Hopper. His last name was Hopper. He hadn't been in Hawkins for a long time, just the past three months or so, but he remembered the name from a conversation at the dinner table. "You can just tell me why you got in the fight and I'll let you off with a warning. Won't make your parents pick you up at the station. But I need something to write down for the police report."

Hopper looked back at Mike through the rear view mirror, but he simply turned his head back to look outside the window. He heard

the man sigh and turn the key into the ignition before a voice went off through the radio.

“Dad? Are you there?”

Mike perked up at the sound of the girl coming in through the speakers, his head immediately turning back to Hopper. He had a daughter? The man picked up the small microphone and put it up to his mouth.

“Yes, Eleven,” he answered. Eleven?

“Are you coming back soon? I want ice cream.”

Mike didn’t know how to explain it but she sounded cute, her voice sweet like honey in a way he couldn’t explain. He chuckled at her voice and immediately swallowed his laughter when Hopper glared at him through the mirror.

“Yeah. I’ll be at the station soon. I just picked up a sixteen-year-old punk from a fight. I got to take him there and get it sorted out.”

It was silent on the other end for a while before her voice returned, this time in a whisper.

“Is he cute?”

Mike’s face started burning up, coughing loudly at her question and trying to control himself.

“Let me ask,” Hopper said seriously, turning back to look at Mike who was still red and desperately wishing he could hide his face in hands. “Hey, kid. My daughter wants to know if you’re cute.”

“I...umm...well...you see...” He honestly didn’t know what to say. In his sixteen years of life, he’d had two girls in his life call him handsome: his mom, and Jennifer Hayes once on a dare back in the eighth grade. He knew he wasn’t the best looking guy, personally thinking he had too many freckles and his black hair made his skin look paler than it actually was. But he wasn’t ugly, per se. At least, he didn’t want to think so.

He looked back up at Hopper who was looking at him expectantly, waiting for an answer. "I want to say yes, sir. But I wouldn't know exactly if I'm her type-."

"The kid said he is the goddamn cutest thing on the face of the planet since those little, alien monsters in the movie you made me watch," he interrupted him, speaking back to Eleven.

"Mogwais," Mike and Eleven both said at the same time, making Hopper roll his eyes and let out a groan.

"Yeah sure whatever. I'll be there soon."

He hung up the microphone and put on his seatbelt before finally putting the truck in drive and taking off into town towards the station. Mike felt more nervous than before. And it wasn't even because of his parents.

"I didn't know you had a daughter," Mike said aloud, not really expecting him to say anything in return. He just knew that he didn't go to school with any girl with the last name "Hopper."

"She's homeschooled, doesn't get out much. If she went to the high school, though she'd probably be in your grade."

That was all he said and Mike didn't want to push it, still preoccupied with what had happened. The police chief's daughter had asked him if he was cute and now he was regretting his answer. What if she saw him and was disappointed? What if she called him a liar? He didn't even know what she looked like or who she was, but the thought of her taking one look at him and being disappointed was embarrassing enough to make him want to open the door and jump out of the moving vehicle.

He almost did, too, but they arrived at the station sooner than he expected to. Hopper parked the truck and went around to open Mike's door. He held onto his arm and helped him up, his hands still cuffed behind his back. Hopper walked inside, telling him how he was going to sit out in the waiting area while he went to his office and called his parents and started paperwork.

Mike was half listening to everything he was saying, half thinking about what lie he was going to tell his parents. He completely stopped everything, though when he saw her. It had to be her. She was the only teenager in the room, the only other people in the room being an elderly secretary and another male police officer.

He saw her across the room and stopped in his tracks. She was beautiful. Big, brown eyes scanning the pages of a worn out Judy Blume paperback. Her lip gloss covered smile quirked up at the words she read. He couldn't stop looking at her, maybe a little too intensely, as she slowly lifted her head up and her eyes met his.

They stayed there, frozen, and Mike wanted to look away, but he couldn't. He couldn't feel anything except the fierce drumming of his heart against his chest. God, he wished this had been a better situation. Because then maybe he could have actually said something to her. *Hey, you like Judy Blume? So does my older sist-* nope, maybe it was better that he was handcuffed.

She got up from the chair she was sitting at and started making her way towards him, her eyes still never leaving his. She was wearing a baby blue summer dress that hit right at her knees and some beat up white converse that looked like they were falling apart at the seams, not that she seemed to mind. She had a shy smile on her face as she tucked one of her stray brown curls behind her ears and stood right in front of him.

He didn't know what to say, couldn't even think, when she started to lift her hand up to his face. She was about to push his hair out of his eyes and away from his face, the only thing going through his head a constant stream of "oh my god, oh my god, oh my god." But Hopper lightly slapped her hand away before she had the chance.

"Hands off of the delinquent," he scolded.

"I'm trying to see if he's cute or not," she told him, her eyes still not leaving Mike's. He felt his face warm up and wanted to look away, but he couldn't. She was so close, her eyes curious and bright and *beautiful*.

"And," Hopper asked.

She shrugged, finally looking away at Mike. "I haven't decided yet."

He felt his heart drop a little. She hadn't decided if he was cute yet or not, but he had made up his mind about two minutes ago when he walked in that she was the prettiest girl he'd ever seen in his life.

"Well I'm going to sit him down and call his parents," Hopper said, grabbing Mike by his arm again and pulling him to the back of the room where Eleven (that was her name, right?) had been sitting before. "You can sit down with him and decide while you wait."

Mike sat down on one of the plastic chairs, about to tell Hopper his home phone number, but he just strolled past some sliding doors and into his office. He saw Eleven go through a different door, and came back with a wet cloth and an ice pack. She sat down in the chair next to him, her eyes a little shy than they'd been before.

"Can I," she asked quietly, lifting up the wet cloth. He nodded once, twice, and she moved the cold fabric to his face, gently wiping off the dried blood and dirt. They didn't say anything to each other. He just watched her in silence as she cleaned him, the worried look on her face never leaving her. When she finished, she put the cloth on the table nearest to them and moved the ice pack to his cheek.

He winced at the sensation and she drew it back a little, muttering a "sorry" before putting it back on. She kept holding it in place, her eyes looking down at her shoes and both of them not talking. He wanted to say something to her, anything, and with a deep inhale and exhale he did.

"Is your name really Eleven?"

She lifted her head and her eyes met his again, finally. It'd only been a few minutes and he had already missed them.

"It's just a nickname. I was born November 11th, so it's kind of my favorite number." She outstretched her left arm to show him a small "011" tattoo. "My real name is 'Jane' but I like 'Eleven' more."

He smiled at that, his heart tugging at her sweet explanation. He didn't know why, but "Eleven" didn't really seem to fit her either.

Not for him. And it wasn't that he wanted to change her in all of her adorable perfection, but she seemed much more than a number to him.

"Is it okay if I call you 'El,'" he asked nervously. "Short for 'Eleven?'"

Her eyes got a little wider and a smile began spreading onto her face that made him nervous and excited and his stomach fill with butterflies.

"You want to give my nickname a nickname?" He shrugged, a little embarrassed now because, yeah, that sounded stupid. But she quickly bit her lip and gave him a softer smile.

"El," she repeated, almost like trying it out on her tongue. "I like it."

He began to blush, looking away from her so that she wouldn't think he was a total wastoid who couldn't handle a girl smiling at him. In his defense, she was more than just a girl. She was kind and bold and her smile made him feel warmer than the hot Indiana summer sun.

He managed to find and take a breath to calm himself down.

"And you can call me Mike," he added quietly, realizing he hadn't even told her his name. "If you want."

She nodded happily and he smiled back at her. She turned away from him and then under her breath, only looking at him through the corner of her eye.

"And what if I just want to call you?"

His heart stopped before starting back up again and taking off at full speed

"W-what," he choked out.

"Nothing," she said quickly. She looked away from him and started looking at her shoes again, but he noticed the light pink tinge on her face.

"On the phone," he stammered, not understanding if that was what

she meant. “You want to call me on the phone?”

“Well how else would I talk to you,” she asked, still not looking at him.

Oh my god, *she* wanted to talk to *him*?! She wanted *his* phone number?! He felt like he could melt right into the floor if her hand wasn’t still pressing an ice pack against his cheek. He was about to apologize and give her his phone number before she changed her mind about wanting it, but she interrupted him.

“I mean,” she giggled, looking up at him with a smirk. “Unless you plan on getting arrested again-.”

“No,” he said quickly. A little too quickly as she began to laugh a little harder. “No! I...this is my first time ever getting arrested. I don’t do anything like this ever..”

“And what did you do, exactly?”

“I punched someone in the face.”

“Why?”

And he wanted to tell her everything. He wanted to tell her that he wasn’t a delinquent like her dad said. He wanted to tell her that the reason he punched Troy in the face was because he’d caught Will with his boyfriend and threatened them. He wanted to tell her that he was just walking by the scene by chance when he saw Will being pressed up against a brick wall by Troy. He wanted to tell her he was just protecting his best friend, that he was a good guy, but he knew he couldn’t.

But damn, did he want to. And that’s what scared him.

“I can’t tell you,” he told her apologetically. “It’s a...a promise I made to someone else.”

No one knew Will was gay besides him, knew that he’d had a boyfriend for the past two months. He had promised not to say anything to anyone, and he meant to keep that promise. But now Troy had caught them and Will had run off when Mike showed up

and he didn't know what was going to happen.

"Oh," she said simply. He thought he'd ruined it all, that she didn't believe him, but she smiled gently at him again. "That's okay. That guy probably deserved it."

"Totally," he laughed breathlessly. She laughed a little, too before they fell into a comfortable silence. He didn't even know whether to bring up his phone number again, not wanting to ruin the quiet moment between them, when he felt it.

The hand not holding onto his ice pack pressed into the palm of one of his, still behind his back. She looked at him, nervously, and before she could pull it away he closed his fingers against it. She looked at him wide-eyed, a breathless smile on her face, before she leaned back in her chair. He wanted nothing more than to take his handcuffs off so that they could interlace their fingers together, but he settled for rubbing soft circles on the back of her hand with his thumb.

He was a little overwhelmed. He was literally holding hands with the prettiest girl he'd ever seen and he was in a *police station*. His parents would be there any minute and give him the grounding of his life. It all had been worth it before, obviously, getting in trouble to protect Will. But now it was *really* worth it.

They stayed there a few minutes, holding hands, staring at each other shyly, until Hopper came out of his office and walked towards them. He immediately let go of her hand and she pulled it back onto her lap before he could see.

"Okay, kid," Hopper said. "I have good news and bad news. The bad news is your parents will be here soon. The good news is, you have a clean record and apparently, Troy has been going around telling everyone that he beat you up. So you're free to go as soon as your parents get here."

"Really," Mike asked, immediately feeling relieved now that he didn't have to explain to his parents that he had a criminal record now.

Hopper just nodded, obviously more happy about the fact he didn't have to stay and file paperwork rather than Mike being out of

trouble. He picked the boy up from his chair and using one of his keys, released him from the handcuffs. He smiled at El, who was beaming at him from her chair, and thought about how great it would be to hold her hand if her dad wasn't standing literally right next to them.

"Alright, Eleven," he said, looking down at his daughter with brighter eyes and teasingly running his fingers through her hair. "I'm going to lock up my office. Get your things and wait for me outside and we'll go get ice cream."

She bounced up out of her seat, smiling even wider now. Mike watched him go and turned back to El, who was picking up her book and staring expectantly at him.

"So now that you can use your hands," she started, reaching over to the table and grabbing a pen from it. "Are you going to write down your number?"

He blushed at her question and nodded quickly one, two, three times, El obviously enjoying it by how she laughed. He took the pen and book from her hands, opening it up to the title page and writing down the seven little numbers as carefully as he could. He didn't want her to misinterpret one of the numbers and call the wrong person. He wanted her to call him.

Mike handed the book back to her with an even bigger blush and she smiled down at the page before closing the book and pressing it to her heart.

"Bye, Mike," she whispered. She walked past him, his head still fuzzy and his heart beating more than what could be considered healthy, when he finally remembered-

"Hey, El," he called after her. She looked back at him with her hand pressed against the door, ready to go outside. He summoned up all the courage he had in him and took a deep breath before asking, "Did you decide yet...on the cute thing?"

And in the next few years, they would hold hands when he wasn't wearing handcuffs. When she would stretch out her left arm, people

would notice the dainty, charming jewelry on her ring finger instead of her tattoo. And they would all ask afterwards, "So how did you two meet?" And El would always smirk before answering, "My dad arrested him. He told me he was cute."

But for that night, El only smiled at him with nothing but pure happiness and it made his heart race faster than it ever had before.

"Cute. Definitely cute."

Author's Note:

this was based off a post from tumblr: "my dad is a cop and i just called him and he was like "hey i have a 17 year old boy in the back of my cop car right now that i'm running him to the station" and i asked if he was cute and my dad said "Hey, my daughter wants to know if you're cute" and the guy said "i want to say yes, sir" and my dad started laughing so hard"

i decided that it'd be much more fun to do it from mike's perspective :)

hope you enjoyed this fun little au as much as i enjoyed writing it